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NEWSLETTER

100-1158

2 June 1988

Washington

DC

BORDER SAFETY INCLUDES U.S.D.A. Your Congressman has introduced legislation which we hope will increase the safety and well-being of **Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ)** officers of the U S Department of Agriculture. The month of May marked the USDA's 126th anniversary (USDA is one of our oldest federal departments, dating back before the Civil War), and the legislation I have introduced is a fitting birthday gift.

My bill, **H.R. 4663**, would provide the authority for PPQ officers to carry firearms for self-protection in their work along the international border. The USDA PPQ officer is stationed at border crossings to prevent the introduction of dangerous plant pests and diseases which could threaten U S agriculture.

We ask our PPQ officers to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with U S Customs Service officers and agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration at border crossings. But the PPQ officer has no firearm as do the Customs and DEA agents. If a potential criminal is on the scene, he or she might do harm to **anyone wearing a federal employee uniform** regardless of that person's purpose at the border station.

So we must provide the PPQ officers with the means to defend themselves if necessary. This is similar to what I did years ago for the USDA Cattle Fever Tick Patrol when I guided legislation which allowed them to carry firearms as they rode horseback along the Rio Grande. We hope to extend this means of self-defense to our USDA PPQ officials.

My bill has been referred to two House Committees for consideration: The Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Judiciary. We will do all we can to ensure success.

#

FARM BUREAU MEETINGS IN SOUTH TEXAS. In connection with our Memorial weekend schedule (mentioned in last week's letter), we had the opportunity to meet with members of the Hidalgo County and Karnes County Farm Bureaus.

On Friday the 27th, we visited with many long-time friends who are active in the Hidalgo County Farm Bureau which has its headquarters in Pharr. On Tuesday, May 31, we met in Karnes City with members of the Karnes County Farm Bureau. In both instances, our thoughts were chiefly focused on tax issues affecting agriculture producers and the emerging drought situation.

I explained my efforts with leaders of the House Ways and Means Committee as I try and convince this Committee to move legislation I have introduced to repeal the **diesel fuel tax rebate provisions and the heifer tax provisions in the 1986 Tax Reform Act.** And I discussed the USDA position, or lack thereof, on the drought. And I told everyone of the May 12 Drought Task Force meeting which I organized in our House Agriculture Committee office. We continue our efforts each day on these important concerns to farmers and ranchers.

#

KIKA DE LA GARZA, 15TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

THE MARCH OF DIMES BENEFIT GALA. Every year about this time the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation sponsors a black tie gala dinner in Washington to continue its drive for donations. Your Congressman participates each year because the March of Dimes is committed to something which is very close to his heart: the principle that children of future generations should have the gift of health at birth. This year's event was the 6th annual Celebrity Chef fundraiser and it marked the 50th anniversary of the March of Dimes. **Mrs John Breaux, wife of Louisiana Senator John Breaux, was the Chairman of this year's Gourmet Gala and she did a fantastic job in making this year's event a total success.**

At last year's gala, I prepared my favorite South Texas fajitas and my dish won a prize for being the best food in terms of style--the **in-cuisine!!** This year, the March of Dimes offered a parade of the best chefs from some of the best restaurants across the country. They prepared gourmet dishes for the dinner at Washington's Capitol Hilton Hotel on May 24th and **Members of Congress and Senators were designated as "Culinary Experts" to assist each celebrity chef.** Your Congressman was matched with famed New York City chef Alfred Portale of the Gotham Bar and Grill in Manhattan. He made a terrine of chicken breast and wild mushrooms with cayenne pepper!

During the dinner, we had the opportunity to talk a while with famous New Orleans chef **Paul Prudhomme of K. Paul's Louisiana Kitchen.** Mr Prudhomme prepared Crevettes Belle Creole (shrimp creole) and needless to say it was beyond reproach! It was just about as good as my own special Mexican garlic shrimp recipe!

We have great fun doing this--all with a very serious purpose behind it. We fully support the work of miracles being performed by the March of Dimes and whenever there is a way for us to help--we will do it gladly, at any time.

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WEST GERMAN CHANCERY RECEPTION. Your congressman last week attended a reception at the Chancery of the Federal Republic of Germany. We were marking the 39th anniversary of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany and over 500 people attended this important birthday celebration for democracy in Germany.

We were pleased to also receive a delegation from the Committee on Agriculture of the **German Bundestag** (Parliament) for talks on important food trade issues between our two countries. I had the chance to try my German--and I think it came out okay! The Senate Committee on Agriculture held an evening reception for this visiting Bundestag delegation and we enjoyed the informal occasion to talk and exchange ideas.

#

A FOND FAREWELL. Last week we said a fond good-bye to young Miss Heather Foley who has worked one day each week in our Washington Congressional office as part of an intern program sponsored by **The Madeira School** in Washington. This is a tradition in our Congressional office dating back to Miss Shannon Kilgore who was the first Madeira School intern for the 15th Congressional District. (Shannon is now married and back in Washington working as an attorney!)

Our Madeira School intern for 1987/88 was Heather Foley. Her name was alluring to me from the start. Her name is the same as the wife of our U.S. House Majority Leader, Rep Tom Foley. So on Heather's last day at work, I brought her together with her namesake, Mrs Tom (Heather) Foley and the meeting was warm and pleasant. (Of even greater coincidence, young Heather has a brother named Tom!) We thank Heather for helping us out--and wish her well as she continues into college and her life's career.

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VISITORS FROM HOME. City Manager Jose Escamilla, Marcus Barrera, Sean Walsh, Eustolia Perez, and Carolina Martinez--all of McAllen; James and Dorothy McCoy of Pharr; Sam Vale of Rio Grande City.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

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